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CLOSE COMBAT

PREFACE.

1. Designed to teach how to fight and kill without firearms. Since the course includes the use of the knife, "close combat" is not strictly correct. "Silent Killing" is a more appropriate description.

2. Time available to students is limited. It is essential, therefore, to confine the teaching to what is simple, easily learned and deadly. With that object, all holds, throws, etc., that do not merit this description have been rigorously excluded. The syllabus which follows must now be regarded as standard and instructors, therefore, will please not deviate from it in any way whatever. It is plainly undesirable that students should be taught one method in ode place and another method somewhere else.

3. The syllabus includes various suggestions by instructors themselves. Further suggestions, if they constitute improvements, will be welcomed. Such suggestions must be put forward through the proper channels and must not he taught to students until sanction has been received.

4. Dummies are essential. Six should be provided, slung irregularly in a space approximately 10 or 12 feet square. In addition, each instructor must make a straw—filled dummy far practice with the knife.

5. Other Equipment. German steel helmets are available and each instructor should have one, for practice in sentry attacks. Dummy knives are useful but cure should 1i6 taken that they are of some material which will mt caus& injury. Wood, for that reason, is not permissible. Rubber is unobtainable. The most practical solution appears to be short lengths of suitably thick rope.

6. Kit. etc. Ordinary P.T. kit is best though, at suitable intervals, students should practice in the kit that they are most likely to won in the field. Students should not always be paired off in equal sizes. Sometimes, small men should be paired with big men.

7. Then commencing the course with a class of untrained students, the instructor should make a short introduction, not necessarily in the same words but to the sane effect as the following:

> "This system of combat is designed for use when you have lost your firearms, which is something you should not do, or when the use of firearms is undesirable for fear of raising an alarm.
>
> At some time or other, must of you, probably, have been taught at least the rudiments of boxing, under the Queensbury rules. That

training was useful because it taught you to think and move quickly and how to hit hard. The Queensbury rules enumerate under the heading of "fouls", some good targets which the boxer is not trained to defend.

This, however, is not sport. Your aim is to kill your opponent as quickly as possible. A prisoner is generally a handicap and a source of danger, particularly if you are without weapons. So forget the Queensbury rules; forget the tern "foul methods". That nay sound cruel but it is still more cruel to take longer than necessary to kill your opponent. "Foul methods" so—called, help you to kill quickly. Attack your opponent's weakest points, therefore. He will attack yours if he gets a chance.

There have been many famous boxers and wrestlers who time after time have won their contests with their favorite blows or holds. The reason is that they had so perfected those particular blows arid holds that few could withstand them. The same applies to you. If you will take the trouble to perfect one method of attack, you will be far more formidable than if you only become fairly good at all the methods which you will to shown.

Since this course of instruction is meant to teach you to kill, it will be plain to you that its methods are dangerous. Your object here is to learn how to kill but it is quite unnecessary to kill or damage your sparring partner, you will get no credit if you do. In learning and practicing, therefore, you will avoid taking any risks of that kind. You must never disregard the submission signal - two taps on your opponent's body or on your own, or on the floor. It is the signal to stop instantly and that is a rule which must never be broken."

8. The syllabus is divided into six progressive sections. This arrangement is to be regarded, however, as elastic. Depending on such considerations as time available, progress made by students or their standard of knowledge, there is no reason, for example, why two or are sections should not be amalgamated.

9. One of the primary objects of the instructor is to make his students attack-minded, and dangerously so. No effort should be spared to realize this object, which should be regarded as one of the instructor's chief responsibilities. No instructor should be satisfied unless his students become thoroughly proficient in the performance of the few simple things enumerated in the syllabus. Dull as it may become, constant repetition is the only road to proficiency and constant repetition there must be, no matter how much students may complain of boredom. Their business is to learn, at any cost. fly proficiency is meant the ability to execute all the requirements of the syllabus swiftly, effectively and neatly, without having to stop to think.

The Syllabus

SECTION 1.

Blows with the side of the hand. Explain that the most deadly blows without the aid of weapons are those with the side of the hand. To deliver them effectively the fingers must be together, thumb up, anti the whole hand tensed. The blow is struck with the side of the hand, all the force being concentrated in one small area, i.e. approximately half-way between thy base of the little finger and the wrist joint, or where the hand is broadcast. If striking Sideways, the back of the hand must be uppermost. No force can be obtained if the palm is uppermost.

Explain that with these blows, it is possible to kill, temporarily paralyze, break bones or badly hurt, depending upon the part of the body that is struck. The effect of these blows is obtained by the speed with which they are delivered rather than by the weight behind them. They can be made from almost any position, whether the striker is on balance or not, and thus can be delivered more quickly than any other blow.

Having explained the blows, the instructor should demonstrate then on the dummies and get the students to practice after him. His main point here is to bring out the speed of the blow, and to see that students deliver them correctly.

Students should now be shown where to strike, as follows, explaining the effect on each Particular point:

1. On the back of the neck, immediately on either side of the spine.

2. From the bridge of the nose to the base of the throat.

3. On either side of the head and throat, from base of the throat to the temple area.

4. On the upper arm.

5. On the fore arm.

6. The kidney region.

Students should practice on the dummied again, keeping in mind the vulnerable points listed above. Strike with either hand.

SECTION 2.

Other Blows.

How to kick. As a general rule, kick with the side of the foot and, unless you possess unusually good root work and balance, don't kick above knee height.

Never kick too foremost unless your opponent has both hands occupied. In that case, it is safe to kick to the fork. Once an opponent is down, kill by kicking the side or back of the head (not the top of the head).

The boxing blows.

The open-hand chin jab, fingers held back and apart ready to follow up to the eyes. Utilize the occasion to obtain some improvement in feet-work, explaining that the body must be properly positioned in order to obtain telling effect from either boxing blows or the open—hand chin Jab. Explain, too, that neither can secure more than a knock—out, which should be followed up instantly by a killing attack.

Use of the Knee , often in simultaneous combination with other attacks (e.g. with the chin-jab). Show how, while being used for attack, it is an excellent guard for oneself.

Use of the head and elbows, for attack when the opponent is not in position for more effective blows.

Finger-tip jabs, to solar plexus, base of throat, or eyes, when nothing more effective can be done.

All the blows listed should be practiced now on the dummies.

Conclude this section by telling students, as emphatically as possible:

a) That they should never go to the ground if they can help it. If they have to, they should get up again as soon as they can. While a man is killing his opponent on the ground, the Opponent's friends could walk up and kick his brains out. Again, while on the ground, it is difficult to go on attacking.

b) That if their knowledge of the subject is confined to the contents of Sections 1 and 2, they will have made themselves extremely dangerous, even to highly trained adversaries, if only they will attack first and keep on attacking. Don't stop just because an opponent is crippled. If you have broken his arm, for instance, that is only of value because it is then easier to kill.

SECTION 3

Releases from holds.

Explain first that, in general nobody should be so slow in wits or body as to allow someone else to get a hold on him. In case of misfortune, however, show how to effect release from:

A wrist hold, taken with one hand.
A wrist hold, taken with two hands.
A throat hold, taken with one hand.

A throat hold, taken with two hands.
Show here how, instead of the customary wrist and elbow release or one of its variants, it is far simpler, quicker and more effective to attack, e.g. knee to the fork and fingers to the eyes, Simultaneously.

A body field, from front or rear, arms free and arms pinioned.
Police or "come-along" holds.

The whole idea of releasing yourself from a hold is to enable you to attack and kill your adversary. whenever Possible, the disengaging movement should form the commencement of an attack. In any case, there must be an effective and instant follow-up attack after every release. The instructor should demonstrate most carefully every detail to do with this Section and then insist on students practicing until not only the mode of release but the subsequent attack becomes a matter of instinct, to be carried out at lightning speed. The instructor should emphasize the importance of footwork, and, where necessary, try to improve it.

SECTION 4.

Crowd Fighting.

One cannot always choose when one will fight and it may sometimes happen that one is faced with several opponents at once. On such occasions, unarmed yourself, your object is not so much to kill your opponents as to get quickly away from them so that you do not get killed. Pride is expensive if it entails defeat and death.

To escape from circumstances like these, a special technique is necessary.

For this technique, balance is essential and the instructor should now demonstrate how to keep on balance when swift movement is necessary in kicking while standing on one foot. Students can be paired off and, standing on one foot, arms folded, they should try to kick each other off balance whilst maintaining their own balance.

Once this is mastered, it should be explained that, surrounded by a crowd, your only chance of escape lies in continual movement. This is so because, after you have taken up a new position it requires a second for on opponent to turn and balance before he is able to strike you with any force. If one moves at least three feet in each second, there is obviously little chance of an opponent scoring an effective hit on you. At the same tine, by the use of the blows previously learned, you will be able to do considerable damage while you are moving.

NOTE: 1. In addition to forward, backward and lateral movement, move also at different levels; sometimes with the knees very much bent. It all-helps, if done at speed, to bewilder your adversaries.

2. Of necessity, there will be little room for movement, so

make room by moving against one opponent after another, attacking as you do so. Point out the value of the balance and foot work in which the students should have been practiced at the beginning of this section.

The information contained in the two above notes should suffice to prepare students for the actual practice, which is now outlined.

Six dummies should be suspended as indicated in the preface. One student at a time should enter the ring and, with all the speed of which he is capable, should then attack the dummies at random, using every kind of blow with hand, foot, knee, elbow and head, from any position.

The practice is very exhausting end it is difficult to keep it up for more than half a minute.

The instructor must watch carefully for faults so that he can give advice afterwards.

Before the student tires he should be told to leave the ring and he will do so at speed, exactly as if he were actually making an escape.

To derive the maximum benefit from this exercise it should first be done both by the instructor and the student in slow time, paying careful attention to footwork.

It should then be followed by many short periods in the ring and only an occasional longer one. It must always be remembered that the aim is to get out of the place and not to fight any longer than necessary.

SECTION 5.

Knife Fighting.

The knife is a silent and deadly weapon that is easily concealed and against which in the hands of an expert, there is sure defense, except fire-arms or by running like hell.

Students should be taught how to hold a knife, how to pass it from one hand to another, to thrust and how to use the disengaged hand to feint and parry. It is unnecessary to be ambidextrous to be able to use the knife with either hand.

Show the vulnerable points, emphasizing that the abdominal region is the principal target. Show how to take an opening for a thrust in that region, e.g., by slashing across face, hands, wrist and fore—arms, by flinging gravel, a stone, a hat, a handkerchief, etc., in the opponents face.

Explain the value of a really sharp point and edge, the latter, particularly with a double-edged knife, being as much to prevent the knife from being seized as for slashing..

Show the ham-string slash at the back of the knee.

Make students now practice thrusts at the- straw-filled dummy.

SECTION 6.

For special needs and occasions:

1 Killing a sentry, if you are armed with a knife.
Attack from the rear. With left forearm, strike violently on left side of opponent's neck and instantly transfer the left hand to cover his mouth and nostrils. Simultaneously with the blow on the neck, thrust the knife (held in the right hand) into his kidneys. If equipment interferes with the kidney thrust, bring the hand round to the front and thrust into the abdomen. Note that once the left hand covers mouth and nostrils, the adversary is dragged backwards and downwards.

2. Killing a sentry, if you are un-armed
Attack from the rear. With right fore—arm, strike violently on right side of adversary's neck. Go immediately into the head-hold and take him down on to your thigh. Keeping the hold properly (i.e., right hand open and tensed, forearm between adversary's jaw and temple, left hand grasping right wrist so as to apply pressure, lifting up and twisting adversary's head), sit down instantly with legs stretched out in front of you. Instructors will see to it that their students, when practicing with each ether, don't sit down while keeping the hold. With a little ingenuity, it should be possible to adapt one of the dummies for practice. All that is necessary is to sling the dummy on a pulley. The instructor could release the cord and so allow the student to take the dummy to the ground.

Needless to say, extreme speed is necessary for both methods of killing a sentry and both methods should be practiced equally on right end left-hand sides.

3. Spinal Dislocator, opponent sitting or at a much lower level
Approach from rear. Left hand under chin, drag opponent's head back completely under your right arm-pit. Drop your left hand on his left shoulder and passing your right arm across the back of his neck, grip your left wrist from above. The finishing touch is a quick snap upwards and backwards. A very dangerous hold and requires great care -in practicing.

4. Disarming if held up with a pistol.
Explain first that only a fool would hold you up with his pistol within reach of your hands. Nevertheless, it is plainly evident that there are still a lot of such fools about and if you did not know how to deal with them it would be you who would feel a fool.
From the front:
Method A. Hands up, well above your head and wide apart. Don’t look at

the pistol. Bring your right hand down smartly to his wrist, gripping it firmly with your thumb, preferably above. Accompany the movement by a half turn to your left. Simultaneously, your left hand grips the pistol barrel from underneath and presses the pistol backwards. Note that while the pistol is being pressed backwards, its barrel should be parallel with the ground. This will break your opponent's trigger finger and give you possession of the pistol. Turning half-right, attack, with foot or knee to the fork, open-hand, chin-jab, butt with the top of your head or do anything calculated to know your opponent out. Each movement has been described separately but, in actual practice, the several movements should be performed so quickly that they appear to be almost one.

Method B. Hands up, well above your head and wide apart. Don't look at the pistol. Bring you left hand down smartly on to his wrist, gripping it firmly with your thumb, preferably above. Accompany the movement by a half turn to your right. Simultaneously your right hand grips the pistol barrel from underneath and presses the pistol upwards backwards and over. His is practically the equivalent of the ordinary wrist throw and will give you possession of the pistol. Turning half left, attack with foot or knee to the fork, open-hand chin-jab, butt with the top of the head, or do anything calculated to know your opponent out. Each movement has been described in detail, but, in actual practice, the several movements should be performed so quickly that they appear to be almost one.

From the rear;
Method A. Hands up,, well above your head and wide apart. Make up your mind which way you will turn. If to the left, look over your left shoulder, to make sure that it is the pistol which is touching your back. At the same time as you look over your shoulder, turn your right foot inwards. When you are ready to move, turn right round to the left, at the same time bringing your left arm down in a circular sweep over your opponent's pistol arm, continuing the sweeping motion until your opponent's arm is locked firmly under your left armpit. Simultaneously with your turning round, your right hand comes into position for a chin-jab or punch to the jaw and your right knee comes up to your opponent's fork. Finish the matter by turning smartly to your right, reinforcing the movement with your right hand on the elbow of the arm which is still locked under your left armpit. This movement, if continued, will bring him across you, in position, for either a smash to his face with your right knee or a side of the hand blow, with your right hand, on the back of his neck. All to be done with lightning speed.

Method B. Hands up, well above your head and wide apart. Look over your right shoulder, turning your left foot inwards as you do so. Turn right round, to your right, locking your opponent's pistol arm, as described above, but under your right armpit. Meanwhile your left arm is coming round for a side of the hand blow across his throat or face. You are also in position to use your knee. Finish as described above, by turning to your right, etc.

Disarming a man holding someone else up. If holding the pistol in his right hand, smash down with your left hand on his forearm at the elbow joint, simultaneously seizing the pistol from underneath with tour right hand. Turn rapidly to your left until you are face to face with him, pressing the pistol upwards, towards him and finally to the left. Use your knee and butt with your head.

Students should become more proficient in all these five methods of disarming.

5. Searching a prisoner, if you are armed.
Kill him first. If that is inconvenient, make him lie face to the ground, hands out in front of him. Knock him out, with rifle butt, side or butt of the pistol, or with your boot. Then search him.

6. Taking a prisoner away, if you are armed with a rifle or other firearms.
Get someone to cut the prisoner's belt or braces, or make him do so himself. March him away, one of his hands above his head, the other holding up his trousers.

7. Securing a prisoner for some time.
Using 15 feet of cord and any effective knot, show the conventional method, i.e., knock him out, place him face down on the ground, tie his hands behind his back, lead the cord round his throat, back to his wrist. Students should be told not to forget to take the cord with them.

Having shown how to tie him up, show how to gag a prisoner. Almost anything will do to stuff in his mouth - turf, cloth, a forage cap, etc. For something to tie over his mouth; strips can be torn from the prisoner's clothing. If it useful if instructors will let students, once or twice during the course, go through the whole process of tying up and gagging, having handy some cord and strips of cloth for the purpose. It is not enough for students to be told how to do it; they must do it themselves.

8. Defense against a downward or side-wise blow
Presuming that you are utterly unable to get hold of any kind of weapon, no matter how crude, employ one of the following methods:

a) Side-step and attack
b) Perry with the opposite fore-arm and attack

Students should know, at this stage of the training, how best to attack.

Various Holds. Throws, etc.
(not to be taught)

This is a selection of holds, blows, throws, attacks, etc., which are known to every instructor. Sooner or later, some of the most knowing students are sure

to ask the instructor if he knows this, that or the other hold, etc., and if so, why it is not taught. This list is intended to provided answers to such questions.

If obliged by such questions to show some of these holds, etc., the instructor should:

a) Demonstrate the objections.

b) Demonstrate the appropriate releases or counters.

c) Warn students that against a trained adversary, many of these holds, etc., would be difficult, risky or impossible to apply.

d) Warn students of the unwisdom of assuming that their adversaries in this war will be untrained men. If students have mastered the far simpler and quicker methods of the syllabus, all the holds, etc., in the following list are entirely unnecessary. The (unarmed) defenses against a rifle and bayonet are possibly the only exceptions.

e) Holds designed to keep a man captive or to take him away as a prisoner. Point out that the man who attempts to use them for any purpose other then as a means to finish off an opponent should realize that he is running a considerable risk, a risk that is only justified if he has first crippled his opponent or if possesses a marked and obvious superiority in physique or knowledge.

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Defense against a rifle and bayonet
Show particularly the one which consists of parrying the rifle or bayonet away to your left, using your right hand and making a simultaneous half left turn, stepping in immediately to your opponent's left-hand side and attacking at speed with hand, foot or both. Disregard the rifle once you are past the bayonet point.

Explain that all the defense against a bayonet are apt to be extremely effective if you, unarmed, are exceptionally quick and if your opponent doesn't know his job.

Bent-arm hold, as a defense against a downward blow
Why waste time? You have got a parry, in any case, so parry with one fore-arm and attack simultaneously with the knee and disengaged hand (chin-jab or punch to the jaw).

Wrist and elbow hold, usually employed as a defense against a throat hold
Why bother? Attack instead, knee to the fork, fingers to the eyes.

Thumb and elbow hold
Difficult to apply unless your opponent has lost his senses. Show how to escape it.

Head hold
Excellent for dealing with a sentry if carried instantly to its full conclusion. Don't use it merely as a hold, however, for it gives your opponent an opportunity for a crotch throw that can finish you.

Arm and neck hold
Effective but with a quick opponent you are most unlikely to get it.

Japanese strangle
When the hand is in the correct position, i.e., almost on top of the head, you cannot prevent your opponent, if he is quick, from dragging your hand away. If the hand is held lower down, where it cannot be seized and dragged away, you are apt to lose the necessary leverage and the hold becomes ineffective. Also, again if your opponent is quick, he can sink with his full weight and the hold cannot be applied. It can only be applied if secured and taken to its conclusion with extreme speed. A steel helmet would probably make it very difficult to secure the hold.

Rock-crusher
Only effective if delivered in exactly the right spot and if there is no equipment in the way. Why not use one of the other methods of attack?

Grape-vine
Useless as a means of keeping a man prisoner. It needs two men to apply it and if the prisoner does not escape (some men can), he may die before very long. If you want to kill him, do so, but don't torture him. If you want to keep him prisoner, tie him up.

Match-box blow
Good, but you don't always have a match-box at the critical moment. Why not use the elbow, followed immediately by a chin-jab, side of the hand blow, or punch to the jaw?

Baton and spring cosh
Open to the objection common to all forms of attack with the raised arm, in that they leave the attacker wide open. Directly the arm goes up (or sooner), step in close and use your knife. If you have no knife, step in closer and use chin-jab or punch, and the knee. If you yourself use a spring cosh and you miss your blow with the extreme and of the weapon, it is doubtful if they are worth the trouble.

Safety-razor blade, or blades, in cap peak
May be shown, in order that students may know what to expect, but the use fo this device is not to be encouraged.

All the following, good as some of them are, are open to the objection that while attempting to apply them, you make yourself vulnerable to attack. Also if you are in a position to apply them, you are equally in a position to make a killing attack on your opponent. Why not do so?

Handcuff hold

Handcuff hold for smaller opponent
Wrist and neck attack
Police or “come-along” holds
Flying mare and variations
Hipe or hip throw
Wrist throw
Japanese ankle throw
Cross buttock

Addendum

Gagging a Prisoner (see page 8)

The following method should be used:

a) Apply the gag - turf, cloth, handkerchief, forage cap, etc. in the prisoner’s mouth.

b) Similar to the First Aid method of bandaging a broken jaw, place the center of a piece of cloth over the mouth and round the chin and tie at the back of the head as shown in the diagram.

c) Apply the center of a second piece of cloth under the jaw, carry it in front of the ears and tie on top of the head.

Close Combat

Syllabus

1st Period

1. (Introduce to C.C.
   (Object and Explanation of system)

2. (Slow with the side of the hand.
   (Practice with dummies.

2nd Period: Other Blows

a) How to kick
b) Boxing blows
c) The open hand chin jab
d) The use of the knee
e) Use of head and elbows
f) Fingertips jabs

3rd Period Release from Holds

a) Wrist.
b) Throat - With one or both hands
c) Body holds
d) Having released, show subsequent attack

4th Period Crowd Fighting

a) Techniques
b) Practice with dummies
c) “Mad” ½ minute

5th Period Knife Fighting

1. Practice with dummy

6th Period Special Occasions

1. Killing a sentry
   1. If you are armed with a knife
   2. If unarmed
   3. Spinal Dislocator

   NOTE: This last exercise requires great care when practicing

1. Disarming
   Method A
   Method B

2. Searching a prisoner
3. Taking a prisoner away

4. Securing a prisoner
5. Defense against downwards or sideways blow
6. Gagging a prisoner

Addendum

Attacking a Sentry

Under “Killing a Sentry, with a knife or with hands alone” (Section 6 Page 6), the methods there described are designed exclusively for use by one man acting entirely on his own. Those methods remain in force and will continue to be taught but it is necessary now to go further, and to teach methods of attack by two men acting as a team, providing therapy for conditions where this is possible and preferable.

In making this addition to the training, two distinct sets of circumstances are envisaged:

1. Merely to disarm, knock out, tie up, gag and, if necessary, remove a sentry out of reach of immediate discovery. It is extremely unlikely that one man alone could accomplish all this. That is why the Syllabus confines itself in this regard to the simpler task of killing.

2. To disarm, kill and, if necessary, remove a sentry out of reach of immediate discovery. It is thought that one man alone could accomplish all this. That is why the Syllabus confines itself in this regard to the simpler task of killing.

Essentials of both a) and b) are:

Extreme speed,
The utmost silence.

The first essential implies a complete understanding between the two attacker as to the part which each will play; the second refers particularly to the avoidance of noise from a dropped rifle or from the sentry’s nailed boots on a stone pavement, gravel or hard ground.

For the practice of the following methods, the student who acts as sentry will have on nailed boots, wear a German steel helmet and carry a rifle. The attacker will wear rubber shoes. The practice will be carried out on a stone pavement, a gravel path or on hard ground.

a) When the object is not to kill

The “sentry” equipped as above, will take up his position, rifle slung over his right shoulder. The attacking team, having aggroed upon their respective parts, will make the customary “stalk” approach, one immediately behind the other. The leading man will attack the sentry from the rear, using the fore-arm blow on the side of the neck and simultaneously kidney punch (left forearm and right first respectively). Instantly, his left hand is transferred to cover the sentry’s mouth and nostrils. Using his right arm to help, he now commences to drag the sentry backwards and downwards. The second attacker’s job, working as nearly simultaneously as possible with the first attacker, is to secure the rifle, administer a knock-out blow (chin-jab, punch to the jaw,

or solar plexus) and help to lower the sentry to the ground quietly. Once on the ground, the sentry is turned over on his face, the first attacker, kneeling astride of the sentry, knees well under the latter's armpits, proceeds with the tying up. The second attacker, working opposite the first, can proceed with the gagging process. Once bound and gagged, the sentry is to be carried away a few yards, as if to put him out of reach of immediate observation of others.

WEAPON TRAINING

INTRODUCTORY NOTES FOR INSTRUCTORS.

It is not possible for every Instructor to be a tried Gunman. But it is. possible to teach the Pistol successfully by acquiring a thorough knowledge of the principles involved and applying them in a practical way. The principles are based on natural body movements not unique to gun fighting and for that reason the instruction is simple, providing the imagination is used to the fullest extent to visualis9 the circumstances of Gun-fighting, to provide a background. -. Particular attention must be paid to instinctive body movements combined with the speed upon which depends survival.

A large percentage of students have had previous Revolver Training in the old style. It is not advisable to state bluntly that the old method is no ‘good! as it is possible that some of them have achieved considerable success using the pistol as a defensive weapon or in competition shooting. It ‘is better to give a proper Introduction in which you paint a picture of the circumstances under which they might be using the pistol and to show them quite clearly that the method you propose to teach them is the only method of firing under these circumstances.

It shows a healthy interest in the subject if students are continually asking questions. Invariably the Instructor can give a satisfactory answer if he asks himself the question:
"What would be the natural thing to do?".

With, the time and ammunition available-' the aim is to turn out good, fast, plain shots. Time spent teaching fancy or trick shooting is not justified.

As with every sport, providing the principles taught are sound, practice makes perfect. Every endeavor should be made to build up the enthusiasm so that practice is carried out voluntarily. Dummy practice in front of a mirror is particularly beneficial and should be encouraged.

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Instruction in firing the Machine Carbines follows exactly the principles of Pistol Instruction, i.e. Tremendous speed in attack with sufficient accuracy to hit the vital part of a man's body. The conditions are the same,. i.e. Killing at close quarters, demanding aggression and extreme concentration.

The principle of firing and manipulation of the weapon is different inasmuch as you are dealing with a two handed weapon having a larger magazine' capacity end capable of full automatic fire. Automatic fire is of no use unless it is controlled. In the excitement and stress of close combat fighting it is difficult to fire from "Full Automatic" with complete
control and therefore it is better to fire always from "single". With practice, shots are fired very fast and with accuracy in the same way as with the pistol.

The most accurate position for firing a two handed weapon is from the shoulder because the gun is in line with the eyes and you have natural control of your direction. The vital factor which governs the position in which the gun is fired is, of course, the speed with which you can get into the "firing" position from the "carrying" position. With the Thompson the position which gives the maximum speed for the normal man is the "under-arm" position. This is an accurate firing position providing the head is down close 1o the Gun. There are few people who find the butt of the Thompson suitable for obtaining

THE ART OF SILENT KILLING

WW II British Commando-Style

by William L. Cassidy

The history of British unconventional warfare training, in the period from 1938 to 1945, is an epic which, when written, will require several volumes, and still the story will not be told in its fullness. So vast were the British programs, so painstakingly detailed and so secret, that historians now find they must of necessity console themselves with mere sketches, as the greater tale has been lost.

With this in mind, we now direct our attention to a brief sketch of one unconventional warfare program, conducted at the Special Training Center, Lochailort, Invernesshire, Scotland, from 1940 to 1942. The program in question is the legendary Silent Killing course, devised by W.E. Fairbairn and E.A. Sykes, for presentation to British and American secret agencies, and the British Commandos.

For those interested in bureaucratic histories, we recommend F. Spencer Chapman's book, *The Jungle Is Neutral,* which gives a basic account of the founding of STS Lochailort in the spring of 1940.[1] One may also find reference to the school in the author's own volume, *Quick Or Dead,* where particular note is made of the school's program of instruction in close-quarter combat use of the one-hand gun.[2]

For the purposes of the following work, however, we are less concerned with the who and why of STS Lochailort (it was founded by the Stirling brothers, "Mad Mike" Calvert and some others, with the blessings of the Military Intelligence Directorate) than we are with the specifics of the Silent Killing course.

According to the Silent Killing Instructors' Guide, the course itself was, "...designed to teach how to fight and kill without the use of firearms. Since the course includes the use of the knife, the term 'unarmed combat' would not be technically correct. 'Silent killing' has been chosen, therefore, as a more accurate description."[3]

After an initial toughening up period, in which potential students were exposed to the most difficult physical tests imaginable, those who survived were treated to a brief lecture delivered by battle-scarred veterans of the Shanghai Municipal Police, especially drafted by Fairbairn and Sykes for use as instructors. Fortunately, the text of this first lecture has survived to the present day, and it is worth

Photo courtesy of CSR London

In cadence, execute! Sentry killing with the Fairbairn-Sykes fighting knife was high point of Lochailort course.

Photo courtesy of Imperial War Museum

"Come right at me, son," said instructors to largest member of each class. Follow up to invitation usually resulted in unceremonial trip to ground for student.

reprinting here in full, if only to convey something of the spirit of its time:

This system of combat is designed for use when you have lost your firearms, which is something you should not do, or when the use of firearms is undesirable for fear of raising an alarm.

At some time or other, most of you, probably, have been taught at least the rudiments of boxing, under the Queensberry rules. That training was useful because it taught you to think and move quickly and how to hit hard. The Queensberry rules enumerate, under the heading of "fouls," some good targets which the boxer is not trained to defend.

This, however, is WAR, not sport. Your aim is to kill *your opponent as quickly as possible. A prisoner is generally a handicap and a source of danger, particularly if you are without weapons. So forget the Queensberry rules; forget the term "foul methods." That may sound cruel but it is still more cruel to take longer than necessary to kill your opponent. "Foul methods" so-called, help you to kill quickly. Attack your opponent's weakest points, therefore. He will attack yours if he gets a chance.*[4]

At this point, the lecturer would pause dramatically, and look about the class, searching every face. In some he would observe the smirk of the man "who knew better." In others, the pale smile and perspiring brow of the man who knew nothing. In his closing remarks, he would try to appease both.

There have been many famous boxers and wrestlers who time after time have won their contests with their favourite blows or holds. The reason is that they had so perfected those particular blows and holds that few could withstand them. The same applies to you. If you will take the trouble to perfect one method of attack, you will be far more formidable than if you only become fairly good at all the methods which you will be shown.

Since this course of instruction is designed to teach you to kill, it will be plain to you that its methods are dangerous. Your object here is to learn, not to damage, and you will get no credit if you break your sparring partner's neck, for example. In learning and practising, you will avoid, therefore, taking any risks of that kind. The submission signal (the two taps, on your own body or your partner's or on the floor) must never be disregarded. It is the signal to stop instantly, and that is a rule which must never be broken.[5]

Typically, in the silence after this lecture was delivered, a glint of mischief would come into the instructor's eye, and he would put the class on its feet, in a rough semi-circle before him. Sizing up the largest, hardest looking lad in the group, he would issue a challenge that by war's end had reached the status of a cliche: "Come right at me, son!" A second later, the class would be breaking up in gales of laughter, and the challenger would be ruefuly rubbing his hindquarters from a most undignified position on the floor. Fairbairn made it a standard practice for instructors to immediately throw, throttle, and kick the largest member of every class. Students who were obviously out to "teach the teachers" were singled out for special treatment. In later days, one inventive Silent Killing instructor, a former sergeant on the Shanghai Riot Squad, would greet his students while hanging by his heels from the limb of a tree. "Can't say you look so tough from here!" he would jibe, and then level one of the grinning on-lookers with a kick and a punch as he jumped down from his perch.[6]

The basic Silent Killing course, as presented circa July 1942, was divided into six progressive sections. Section 1 dealt with blows delivered with the side of the hand. It was explained that the effect of such blows is determined by the speed with which they are delivered, as distinct from the weight behind them. Students were cautioned to strike with the palm down, the thumb up and the whole hand tensed. The object of this method is to concentrate the force of the blow in one small area, approximately half-way between the base of the little finger and the wrist.

Practice was made upon dummies, specially packed to simulate the resistance of a human body. Six targets were singled out for attention:

1. On the back of the neck, immediately on either side of the spine.
2. From the bridge of the nose to the base of the throat.
3. On either side of the head and throat, from base of the throat to the temple area.

4. On the upper arm.
5. On the fore arm.
6. The kidney region.[7]

Instructors were careful to point out that with such blows, it is possible to kill, paralyze, break bones, or otherwise badly injure one's opponent.

Section 1 having been mastered, students were initiated into the mysteries of Section 2, which presented kicks, open-hand chin jabs, use of the knee, head and elbows, and finger-tip jabs. At the conclusion of this block of instruction, students were lined up and told most emphatically:

. . . That they should never go to the ground if they can help it. If they have to, they should get up again as soon as they can. While a man is killing his opponent on the ground, the opponent's friends could walk up and kick his brains out. . . .

. . . That if their knowledge of the subject is confined to the contents of Sections 1 and 2, they will have made themselves extremely dangerous, even to highly trained adversaries, if only they will attack first and keep on attacking. (Original emphasis.)[8]

Section 3 dealt with releases from holds. Instructors demonstrated how to escape from one- and two-hand wrist and throat holds, hair holds, front and rear body holds, and police or "come-along" holds. The essence of good release work was said to be instinctive, lightning speed, deft footwork, and instant attack.

In Section 4, the niceties of crowd fighting were discussed, after which students were treated to a rigorous practice session in a specially rigged boxing ring. Six dummies were suspended in the center of the ring, situated at all sides around the student. On command, the student engaged the dummies at random, employing every sort of blow with hand, foot, knee, elbow and head, from any necessary position. The student would then exit the ring at full speed, exactly as if he were being pursued. "It must always be remembered," states the Silent Killing guide, "that the aim is to get out of the place and not to fight any longer than necessary."[9]

Section 5 was devoted to Fairbairn's famous course of instruction in use of the Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife.[10] Students were taught how to hold the knife, how to pass it from one hand to another, how to thrust, and how to use the free hand to feint and parry. After practice in these rudiments, the correct method of slashing was taught, and a brief lecture was delivered on the subject of knife carry and concealment. Knife instruction was the high point of the entire course, and students were, from the very beginning, taught to appreciate the unique character of the Fairbairn-Sykes Fighting Knife:

The knife is a silent and deadly weapon that is easily concealed and against which in the hands of an expert there is no sure defence, except fire-arms or by running like hell.[11]

Section 6 discussed, "Useful aids, for special needs and occasions." Under this heading instructors combined material on unarmed sentry killing; sentry killing with a knife; a pleasant little kink known as the spinal dislocator; the varieties of disarming technique; prisoner searching; moving a prisoner; securing a prisoner; the basic method of breaking an arm, and the bent-arm hold.

At the conclusion of Sections 1 through 6, if time remained and the students were apt, or if the intended assignment of specialist personnel so demanded, an advanced course was presented, detailing arcane blows and holds perfected in Shanghai; methods of strangulation; the precise way to crush a man's testicles; and the use of such aids as the spring cosh, the safety-razor blade, and the simple matchbox.

The Silent Killing course, both basic and advanced, as we have here outlined, began in the early summer of 1940, and enjoyed the personal attentions of both W.E. Fairbairn and E.A. Sykes on and off until approximately February 1942. In February 1942, the Commando Depot, later the Commando Basic Training Center, was established by Major-General J.C. Haydon at Achnacarry, some few miles away from Lochailort, and placed under the direction of Lieutenant-Colonel Charles E. Vaughan.[12] Shortly thereafter, with training under way at Achnacarry, Fairbairn turned his attentions to the needs of the Special Operations Executive's Camp X, in Canada, and later, the Office of Strategic Services' Area B-5,

Photo courtesy of CSR London

Physical conditioning was important part of commando training. Here, Thompson SMG-armed student scales rock face.

Sequence of photos shows technique for relieving opponent of rifle (left), then smashing in his head with it

in Maryland, U.S.A.[13] Sykes, for his part, devoted his efforts to service as the resident pistol instructor at STS XXI, or Arisaig House, a SOE training center a few miles west of Lochailort.[14]

The Lochailort course nevertheless served as the model for every course which followed; both those of the Commando Basic Training Center, and of the SOE Special Training Schools. It was, in one form or another presented (though not necessarily at Lochailort), to personnel from British Independent Companies numbers 1 through 11; British Commandos numbers 1 through 11; 30 Commando, later the 30th Assault or Admiralty Intelligence Unit; 62 Commando; the 1 Small Scale Raiding Force; the Special Boat Section; elements of the Australian Independent Companies; elements of SOE, OSS, and a host of other British and American special forces units. Indeed, it may be said that between them, Fairbairn and Sykes trained the whole of the instructor cadre of Anglo-American special forces in the World War of 1939 to 1945.[15]

The progression of the Lochailort material from Britain to America is particularly interesting. In early 1942, the OSS assigned then-Lieutenant Rex Applegate to STS Lochailort, where he received the course at the hands of E.A. Sykes. Thereafter, Applegate returned to the United States where, in liaison with Fairbairn, he established the course of instruction in Silent Killing at OSS's Area B-5, America's first specialized intelligence school. A comparison between the British and American courses shows very little difference, proof that America's first secret servants were taught on the British model.[16]

It is also worth noting that a good portion of the original Lochailort course was incorporated in Rex Applegate's immortal *Kill Or Get Killed,* something which has helped the book earn its well-deserved reputation as the most complete study of close-combat ever written.[17]

Through the vehicle of *Kill Or Get Killed,* the Lochailort doctrine, as tailored by Applegate, has thus reached a wide audience. Indeed, something of its methods are included in most if not all of the programs presented by the armed forces, and all federal intelligence and investigative agencies. The same might also be said for a considerable number of state and local police departments, and a number of foreign agencies which have enjoyed the benefits of either U.S. or British training.

For in spite of its somewhat bloodthirsty designation, the original Silent Killing course, unique as it may have been in its day, reveals itself to us now as nothing more than a skillful, intelligent presentation of proven techniques. This is not to in any fashion minimize the course. On the contrary, this knowledge serves to

Special Training Center at Lochailort, Scotlan

(center). Versatility was stressed—if weapon was not available, helmet served as effective throat crusher (right). Imperial War Museum Photos

highlight the course's most appealing feature.

The feature of which we speak is summarized under the heading of "tradition." One finds it such a simple matter to confine one's thinking regarding close-combat to the traditions of Asia. But in so doing, one misses the fact that there is a Western tradition every bit as valid as its Eastern counterpart.

The techniques presented in the original Silent Killing course, and, ultimately, presented in our own time, owe their creation to the early work of W.E. Fairbairn in the streets of Shanghai. They were, from the very beginning, designed as a peculiarly Western martial art, a means whereby the English-speaking world could come to grips with and win over Oriental systems. These techniques were refined in the bitter laboratory that was the Second World War, and reach the present day more or less intact. Whether we call them the simple techniques of hand-to-hand, or whether we award them the dramatic title "silent killing," we still need to recognize them for what they are. And they are, if nothing else, an expression of how we have come to perceive personal combat: the first Anglo-American preserve of martial tradition.

Photo courtesy of William L. Cassidy

-more tranquil today than in its 1938-1945 heyday.

END NOTES

[1]F. Spencer Chapman, *The Jungle Is Neutral.* (New York: W.W.Norton & Company, Inc., 1949).

[2]William L. Cassidy, *Quick Or Dead: The Rise and Development of Close-Quarter Combat Firing of the Self-Loading Pistol and Other One-Hand Guns &c.* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 1978).

[3]Special Operations Executive, *Silent Killing: For the Use of Instructors.* Revised 30 June 1942 (Most Secret) n.p., p. 1.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]*Ibid.*

[6]The anecdote appears in George Langellan's *The Masks of War,* originally published as *Knights of the Floating Silk* (London: Hutchison, 1959), and is quoted here from memory.

[7]Special Operations Executive, *op. cit.,* p. 2.

[8]*Op. cit.,* p. 3.

[9]*Op. cit.,* p. 4.

[10]The essentials of this course are set forth in William L. Cassidy, *Basic Manual of Knife Fighting.* (Boulder: Paladin Press, 1978).

[11]Special Operations Executive, *op. cit.,* p. 4.

[12]James Ladd, *Commandos and Rangers of World War II.* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978). A notoriously inaccurate source, yet accurate in this instance. See p. 168.

[13]Personal information.

[14]Personal information.

[15]Personal information.

[16]The British course in question was compared with Office of Strategic Services, *Close-Combat: Area B-5 Course.* (Top Secret) 1942.

[17]Rex Applegate, *Kill Or Get Killed.* 1969 edition. Reprint. (Boulder: Paladin Press, 1977).

NB: Those desiring background information on Fairbairn and Sykes are directed to William L. Cassidy, "Quick Or Dead In Shanghai: Combat Pistolcraft with the Shanghai Municipal Police." *Soldier of Fortune* Vol. 4, No. 3, March 1979, pp. 30-35. See also William L. Cassidy, "Shanghai Experiments." *Soldier of Fortune,* Vol. 4, No. 4, April 1979, pp. 44-47, reprinted from *The Police Journal,* Vol. LII, No. 1, January-February 1978.